

A QUEEN OF THE MODERN AGE

ISABEL CLARA EUGENIA (1566 – 1633)

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An expected birth.

The 12th of August of 1566, the first daughter of Isabel of Valois and Philip II, Isabel Clara Eugenia, was born. She was called Isabel as her mother, Clara for her birth and Eugenia in honour of St. Eugenio. Isabel of Valois commented after her birth: 'Thanks to God giving birth is not as laborous as I thought'. Isabel was going to be baptised the 25th of August of

the same year. Philip II only had one son, Carlos, what needed another male to ensure the dynasty. But the birth of a daughter made him very happy.



A difficult childhood.

With only two years old, Isabel lost her mother in a mortal delivery. A year before, Isabel of Valois had had another daughter, Catalina Michaela. Both girls were inseparable. The king, widowed three times with two daughters, was to remarry. His choice fell on Anne of Austria. The arrival of the new queen was a joy for the girls and for the kingdom; although that joy lasted very little. During this years, the King behaved as a loving and worried father instead of a cold monarch.

Plans of Philip II.

The plans of Philip II for her daughter were extremely ambitious, as he tried to give her the throne of France. Isabel was the granddaughter of Henry II. Philip II's plans came down when Henry IV was crowned King of France in 1598, so he decided to name his daughter sovereign of the Netherlands.



Archdukes of Flandes

In 1598, it is arranged the marriage of Isabel Clara Eugenia with Albert of Austria, made the next year.

The court of Brussels became one of the most important in Europe. Isabel and her husband worked for years to restore peace in the area, while waiting for a heir who

strengthen its political situation. In 1631, Archduke Albert died without issue. Defender of the autonomy of the Netherlands, Isabel faced the new Spanish monarch, his nephew Philip, knowing that lack of descendants would return Flandes to the Spanish Crown. In 1633, she died, loved and respected by those who were his subjects.

